



Dear Ms Hammarskjöld,

On behalf of the Director-General, I have the pleasure to refer to letter LA 41 TS/2024/DN, dated 25 April 2024, referring to Resolution 78/236 entitled “Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework” adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 2023, and requesting information on the practice of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (“FAO”) regarding “the role of technology in shaping treaty-making practice”.

Since January 2020, FAO allows and encourages the electronic deposit of certified true copies of instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval, accession or withdrawal or of other notifications relating to all the treaties concluded under and outside the FAO framework for which the Director-General is the Depositary. Such deposit may be made by email to the Director-General’s dedicated email address [Secretary-DG@fao.org](mailto:Secretary-DG@fao.org), provided it is received from an authorized official email address (i.e. a Permanent Representation or Ministry’s official email address). Electronic means, including email and the use of a platform accessible only to FAO Members, are also systematically used for correspondence issued under the Director-General’s name responding to or otherwise communicating information on treaty-related actions.

Unless a specific request is received for hard copy correspondence or, exceptionally, a treaty ceremony where hard copy deposits are made in-person, paper copies are now rarely received. FAO Members may also sometimes wish to hand to the Director-General or his staff hard copy originals in parallel to a validly effected electronic deposit. Hard copy originals are stored in the archives of FAO.

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Ms Elinor Hammarskjöld  
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and  
United Nations Legal Counsel  
New York  
United States of America





FAO also maintains and is constantly striving to improve its FAO Treaties Database (<https://www.fao.org/treaties/en/>), which is currently available in English, French and Spanish and covers all the treaties for which the Director-General is the Depository. The database enables users to access the full text of each treaty in all the languages of the treaty. The database also provides information on the status of each treaty (i.e. signature, entry into force, participation, declarations and reservations, withdrawals, amendments etc.) and for each country, a list of the treaties it is a party to and the dates of its treaty actions. Users may also peruse and download model instruments and certified true copies of treaties.

With a view to providing holistic, comprehensive information related to a Member's engagement with FAO, the FAO Treaties Database includes a section which lists – by country – each Member's participation in FAO treaties. This section also includes a link to the FAO Country Profile of that Member, drawing together all information on the FAO website related to that country, such as statistical data, reports and publications, and information on ongoing projects and programmes.

Efforts are also underway to explore the possibility of utilizing technology to generate standard treaty-related correspondence, which would be subject to verification by the FAO Legal Office prior to issuance.

I take this opportunity to also inform you that FAO will hold its inaugural FAO Treaty Ceremony during the 44th Session of the FAO Conference (Rome, 28 June-4 July 2025). At this Ceremony, FAO Members will have the opportunity to deposit instruments in-person in relation to Treaties adopted under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution. While this will require manual work that is normally handled by electronic means, I trust that this will be an opportunity for FAO Members to reaffirm – on the 80th Anniversary of FAO's establishment – their commitment to FAO's mandate and normative work, and their efforts to support, through the FAO organizing principle of the *four betters*, the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yours sincerely,

**Donata Rugarabamu**  
Assistant Director-General/Legal Counsel

